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DEPT FOR AF/W; AF/EX; L/DL; DS/OFM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [OFDP](#) [PGOV](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: EVICTION AGAINST BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

¶1. On January 9, a disgruntled landlord attempted to evict the Bulgarian Ambassador from his residence which doubles as the Bulgarian Embassy. According to several sources, the landlord and his minions arrived early in the morning on January 9, forced their way inside the compound and began carrying out the contents of the Embassy/residence and placing them on the street. The landlord also towed out the Bulgarian Ambassador's Mercedes and had the electricity cut off to the Embassy/residence. Heated arguments ensued between the staff of the Embassy/residence and the landlord, and the Bulgarian Ambassador, Nedelcho Peneff, called the Ghana Police, President Kufuor's office and other diplomats (including the U.S. Ambassador) to the scene.

¶2. After the arrival of several officials, including the EU Ambassador and the Attorney General, the eviction process was halted. However, the landlord claimed he had not finished and vowed to return to "finish his work." Neighbors say the Embassy/residence is now guarded 24 hours a day by several guards.

¶3. The landlord contends that the Government of Bulgaria owes him nearly USD 800,000 in rent payments dating from June 1993. He obtained an eviction notice from an Accra High Court judge dated July 9, 2007 which allows him to seize vehicles, furniture, and other equipment. The landlord and the Bulgarians have apparently had land disputes concerning this property since 1978. A dispute in 1990, for example, was mediated by the MFA, and according to the landlord, the Bulgarians were to pay rent from 1993 onward, which they did not. For their part, the Bulgarians claim that they settled the rent issue in 1983 when they paid a "huge" sum of money to the landlord to cover rent for the next 50 years.

¶4. COMMENT: It is unclear at this point which side of the story is accurate, and whether this issue will continue. However, the fact that individuals would violate the space of a diplomatic mission accredited to Ghana and throw the contents on the street is disturbing. The tiny Bulgarian mission, which consists only of the Ambassador, is back at work now and attempting to move forward after this incident.

END COMMENT.

BRIDGEWATER